United Nations A/54/277

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 August 1999

Original: English

Fifty-fourth session
Item 117 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 2200 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, adopted and opened for signature, ratification or accession the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and expressed the hope that the Covenants and the Optional Protocol would be signed, ratified or acceded to without delay. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its future sessions reports concerning the status of ratification of the Covenants and of the Optional Protocol. In response to that request, reports on the status of the International Covenants and the Optional Protocol have been submitted annually to the Assembly since its twenty-second session in 1967.

2. Both Covenants and the Optional Protocol were opened for signature at New York on 19 December 1966. In accordance with their respective provisions,[1] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights entered into force on 3 January 1976, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights entered into force on 23 March 1976 and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, having received the required number of ratifications or accessions, entered into force simultaneously with that Covenant on 23 March 1976.

3. In its resolution 52/116 of 12 December 1997, the General Assembly appealed strongly to all States that had not yet done so to become parties to both Covenants, as well as to accede to the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to make the declaration provided for in article 41 of the Covenant; encouraged the States parties to consider limiting the extent of any reservations they lodge to the International Covenants on Human Rights, to formulate any reservations as precisely and narrowly as possible and to ensure that no reservation was incompatible with the object and purpose of the relevant treaty or otherwise contrary to international law; and encouraged them to review regularly any reservations made in respect of the provisions of the Covenants with a view to withdrawing them. The Assembly once again encouraged all Governments to publish the texts of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its

* A/54/150

99-24665 (E) 240999

Optional Protocols in as many local languages as possible and to distribute them and make them known as widely as possible in their territories. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights effectively assists the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the implementation of their respective mandates, including by the provision of adequate Secretariat staff resources, and to submit to it at its fifty-fourth session a report on the status of the Covenants and the Optional Protocols.

4. As at 1 August 1999, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had been ratified or acceded to by 139 States, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights had been ratified or acceded to by 145 States, and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights had been ratified or acceded to by 95 States. The list of States that have ratified or acceded to the Covenants and the Optional Protocol, together with the dates of ratification or accession and of entry into force, appear in annexes I to III to the present report.

5. The General Assembly, by its resolution 44/128 of 15 December 1989, adopted and opened for signature, ratification or accession the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at the abolition of the death penalty, and called upon all Governments in a position to do so to consider signing and ratifying or acceding to the Second Optional Protocol.

6. The Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights entered into force on 11 July 1991, three months after the date on which the tenth instrument of ratification or accession was deposited with the Secretary-General. As at 1 August 1999, the Second Optional Protocol had been ratified or acceded to by 38 States. The list of States that have ratified or acceded to the Protocol, together with the dates of ratification or accession and entry into force, is contained in annex IV to the present report.

7. Upon ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or subsequently, 46 States made the declaration provided for in article 41 of the Covenant, recognizing the competence of the Human Rights Committee established under article 28 of the Covenant to receive and consider communications to the effect that a State party claims that another State party is not fulfilling its obligations under the Covenant: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Congo, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Gambia, Germany, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Zimbabwe. The provisions of article 41 entered into force on 28 March 1979 in accordance with paragraph 2 of that article. No inter-State communication under article 41 of the Covenant had been filed as at 1 September 1999.

8. As regards the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, established in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17 of 28 May 1985, held its seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth sessions at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 17 November to 5 December 1997, 27 April to 15 May 1998 and 16 November to 4 December 1998 and 26 April to 14 May 1999 respectively. It submitted reports to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive sessions of 1998 and of 1999,[2] in which it made suggestions and recommendations concerning issues arising from the consideration of reports submitted by States parties to the Covenant.

9. As regards the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Human Rights Committee held its sixty-first session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 20 October to 7 November 1997, its sixty-second session at United Nations Headquarters from 23 March to 9 April 1998, its sixty-third session at Geneva from 13 to 31 July 1998, its sixty-fourth session at Geneva from 19 October to 6 November 1998, its sixty-fifth session at Headquarters from 22 March to 9 April 1999 and its sixty-sixth session at Geneva from 12 to 30 July 1999. In accordance with article 45 of the Covenant and article 6 of the First Optional Protocol, the Committee submitted its annual report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session[3] covering the activities of the Committee at its sixty-first to sixty-third sessions. The annual report covering the Committee's activities at its sixty-fourth to sixty-sixth sessions will be submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.[4]

Notes

[1] Article 27 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 49 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 9 of the First Optional Protocol.

[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 2* (E/1998/22); and ibid., *1999, Supplement No. 2* (E/1999/22).

[3] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 40* (A/53/40), vols. I and II.

[4] To be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 40* (A/54/40).

Annex I

List of States that have ratified or acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as at 1 August 1999 (139)

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Afghanistan	24 January 1983[a]	24 April 1983
Albania	4 October 1991[a]	4 January 1992
Algeria	12 September 1989	12 December 1989
Angola	10 January 1992[a]	10 April 1992
Argentina	8 August 1986	8 November 1986
Armenia	13 September 1993	13 December 1993
Australia	10 December 1975	10 March 1976
Austria	10 September 1978	10 December 1978
Azerbaijan	13 August 1992[a]	13 November 1992
Bangladesh	**5 October 1998[a]**	**5 January 1999**
Barbados	5 January 1973[a]	3 January 1976
Belarus	12 November 1973	3 January 1976
Belgium	21 April 1983	21 July 1983
Benin	12 March 1992[a]	12 June 1992
Bolivia	12 August 1982[a]	12 November 1982
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 September 1993[b]	6 March 1992
Brazil	24 January 1992[a]	24 April 1992
Bulgaria	21 September 1970	3 January 1976
Burundi	9 May 1990[a]	9 August 1990
Cambodia	26 May 1992[a]	26 August 1992
Cameroon	27 June 1984[a]	27 September 1984
Canada	19 May 1976[a]	19 August 1976
Cape Verde	6 August 1993[a]	6 November 1993

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Central African Republic	8 May 1981[a]	8 August 1981
Chad	9 June 1995[a]	9 September 1995
Chile	10 February 1972	3 January 1976
China*		
Colombia	29 October 1969	3 January 1976
Congo	5 October 1983[a]	5 January 1984
Costa Rica	29 November 1968	3 January 1976
Côte d'Ivoire	26 March 1992[a]	26 June 1992
Croatia	**12 October 1992[b]**	8 October 1991
Cyprus	2 April 1969	3 January 1976
Czech Republic	22 February 1993[b]	1 January 1993
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	14 September 1981[a]	14 December 1981
Denmark	6 January 1972	3 January 1976
Dominica	17 June 1993[a]	17 September 1993
Dominican Republic	4 January 1978[a]	4 April 1978
Ecuador	6 March 1969	3 January 1976
Egypt	14 January 1982	14 April 1982
El Salvador	30 November 1979	29 February 1980
Equatorial Guinea	25 September 1987[a]	25 December 1987
Eritrea	**20 January 1999[a]**	**20 April 1999**
Estonia	21 October 1991[a]	21 January 1992
Ethiopia	11 June 1993[a]	11 September 1993
Finland	19 August 1975	3 January 1976
France	4 November 1980[a]	4 February 1981
Gabon	21 January 1983[a]	21 April 1983
Gambia	29 December 1978[a]	29 March 1979
Georgia	3 May 1994[a]	3 August 1994

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Germany	17 December 1973	3 January 1976
Greece	16 May 1985[a]	16 August 1985
Grenada	6 September 1991[a]	6 December 1991
Guatemala	19 May 1988[a]	19 August 1988
Guinea	24 January 1978	24 April 1978
Guinea-Bissau	2 July 1992[a]	2 October 1992
Guyana	15 February 1977	15 May 1977
Honduras	17 February 1981[a]	17 May 1981
Hungary	17 January 1974	3 January 1976
Iceland	22 August 1979	22 November 1979
India	10 April 1979[a]	10 July 1979
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	24 June 1975	3 January 1976
Iraq	25 January 1971	3 January 1976
Ireland	8 December 1989	8 March 1990
Israel	3 October 1991	3 January 1992
Italy	15 September 1978	15 December 1978
Jamaica	3 October 1975	3 January 1976
Japan	21 June 1979	21 September 1979
Jordan	28 May 1975	3 January 1976
Kenya	1 May 1972[a]	3 January 1976
Kuwait	20 May 1996[a]	20 August 1996
Kyrgyzstan	7 October 1994	7 January 1995
Latvia	14 April 1992[a]	14 July 1992
Lebanon	3 November 1972[a]	3 January 1976
Lesotho	9 September 1992[a]	9 December 1992
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 May 1970[a]	3 January 1976
Lithuania	20 November 1991[a]	20 February 1992
Luxembourg	18 August 1983	18 November 1983

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Madagascar	22 September 1971[a]	3 January 1976
Malawi	22 December 1993[a]	22 March 1994
Mali	16 July 1974[a]	3 January 1976
Malta	13 September 1990	13 December 1990
Mauritius	12 December 1973[a]	3 January 1976
Mexico	23 March 1981[a]	23 June 1981
Mongolia	18 November 1974	3 January 1976
Morocco	3 May 1979	3 August 1979
Namibia	22 December 1993[a]	22 March 1994
Nepal	14 May 1991[a]	14 August 1991
Netherlands	11 December 1978	11 March 1979
New Zealand	28 December 1978	28 March 1979
Nicaragua	12 March 1980[a]	12 June 1980
Niger	7 March 1986[a]	7 June 1986
Nigeria	29 July 1993[a]	29 October 1993
Norway	13 September 1972	3 January 1976
Panama	8 March 1977	8 June 1977
Paraguay	10 June 1992[a]	10 September 1992
Peru	28 April 1978	28 July 1978
Philippines	7 June 1974	3 January 1976
Poland	18 March 1977	18 June 1977
Portugal	31 July 1978	31 October 1978
Republic of Korea	10 April 1990[a]	10 July 1990
Republic of Moldova	26 January 1993[a]	26 April 1993
Romania	9 December 1974	3 January 1976
Russian Federation	16 October 1973	3 January 1976
Rwanda	16 April 1975[a]	3 January 1976

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	9 November 1981[a]	9 February 1982
San Marino	18 October 1985[a]	18 January 1986
Senegal	13 February 1978	13 May 1978
Seychelles	5 May 1992[a]	5 August 1992
Sierra Leone	23 August 1996[a]	23 November 1996
Slovakia	28 May 1993[b]	1 January 1993
Slovenia	6 July 1992[a]	25 June 1991
Solomon Islands	17 March 1982[b]	17 March 1982
Somalia	24 January 1990[a]	24 April 1990
Spain	27 April 1977	27 July 1977
Sri Lanka	11 June 1980[a]	11 September 1980
Sudan	18 March 1986[a]	18 June 1986
Suriname	28 December 1976[a]	28 March 1977
Sweden	6 December 1971	3 January 1976
Switzerland	18 June 1992[a]	18 September 1992
Syrian Arab Republic	21 April 1969[a]	3 January 1976
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	18 January 1994[b]	17 September 1991
Togo	24 May 1984[a]	24 August 1984
Trinidad and Tobago	8 December 1978[a]	8 March 1979
Tunisia	18 March 1969	3 January 1976
Turkmenistan	1 May 1997[a]	1 August 1996
Uganda	21 January 1987[a]	21 April 1987
Ukraine	12 November 1973	3 January 1976
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	20 May 1976	20 August 1976
United Republic of Tanzania	11 June 1976[a]	11 September 1976

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Uruguay	1 April 1970	3 January 1976
Uzbekistan	27 September 1995[a]	27 December 1996
Venezuela	10 May 1978	10 August 1978
Viet Nam	24 September 1982[a]	24 December 1982
Yemen	9 February 1987[a]	9 May 1987
Yugoslavia	2 June 1971	3 January 1976
Zaire	1 November 1976[a]	1 February 1977
Zambia	10 April 1984[a]	10 July 1984
Zimbabwe	13 May 1991[a]	13 August 1991

* Following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 25 October 1971 on the restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, by a note addressed to the Secretary-General received on 29 September 1972, stated:

> "1. With regard to the multilateral treaties signed, ratified or acceded to by the defunct Chinese Government before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, my Government will examine all their contents before making a decision in the light of the circumstances as to whether or not they should be recognized.
>
> "2. As from 1 October 1949, the day of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chiang Kai-Shek clique has no right at all to represent China. Its signature and ratification of, or accession to, any multilateral treaties by usurping the name of 'China' are all illegal and null and void. My Government will study these multilateral treaties before making a decision in the light of the circumstances as to whether or not they should be acceded to."

The lists in annexes I and II therefore do not include the signature of the two International Covenants and the Optional Protocol on behalf of the "Republic of China" on 5 October 1967.

Annex II

List of States that have ratified or acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as at 1 August 1999 (145)

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Afghanistan	24 January 1983[a]	24 April 1983
Albania	4 October 1991[a]	4 January 1992
Algeria	12 September 1989	12 December 1989
Angola	10 January 1992[a]	10 April 1992
Argentina	8 August 1986	8 November 1986
Armenia	23 June 1993	23 September 1993
Australia	13 August 1980	13 November 1980
Austria	10 September 1978	10 December 1978
Azerbaijan	13 August 1992[a]	13 November 1992
Barbados	5 January 1973[a]	23 March 1976
Belarus	12 November 1973	23 March 1976
Belgium	21 April 1983	21 July 1983
Belize	9 June 1996[a]	9 September 1996
Benin	12 March 1992[a]	12 June 1992
Bolivia	12 August 1982[a]	12 November 1982
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 September 1993[b]	6 March 1992
Brazil	24 January 1992[a]	24 April 1992
Bulgaria	21 September 1970	23 March 1976
Burkina Faso	**4 January 1999[a]**	**4 April 1999**
Burundi	9 May 1990[a]	9 August 1990

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Cambodia	26 May 1992[a]	26 August 1992
Cameroon	27 June 1984[a]	27 September 1984
Canada	19 May 1976[a]	19 August 1976
Cape Verde	6 August 1993[a]	6 November 1993
Central African Republic	8 May 1981[a]	8 August 1981
Chad	9 June 1995[a]	9 September 1995
Chile	10 February 1972	23 March 1976
Colombia	29 October 1969	23 March 1976
Congo	5 October 1983[a]	5 January 1984
Costa Rica	29 November 1968	23 March 1976
Côte d'Ivoire	26 March 1992[a]	26 June 1992
Croatia	8 October 1991[b]	8 October 1991
Cyprus	2 April 1969	23 March 1976
Czech Republic	22 February 1993[b]	1 January 1993
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	14 September 1981[a]	14 December 1981
Democratic Republic of the Congo	**1 November 1976[a]**	**1 February 1977**
Denmark	6 January 1972	23 March 1976
Dominica	17 June 1993[a]	17 September 1993
Dominican Republic	4 January 1978[a]	4 April 1978
Ecuador	6 March 1969	23 March 1976
Egypt	14 January 1982	14 April 1982
El Salvador	30 November 1979	29 February 1980
Equatorial Guinea	25 September 1987[a]	25 December 1987
Estonia	21 October 1991[a]	21 January 1992
Ethiopia	11 June 1993[a]	11 September 1993
Finland	19 August 1975	23 March 1976

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
France	4 November 1980[a]	4 February 1981
Gabon	21 January 1983[a]	21 April 1983
Gambia	22 March 1979[a]	22 June 1979
Georgia	3 May 1994[a]	3 August 1994
Germany	17 December 1973	23 March 1976
Greece	5 May 1997[a]	5 August 1997
Grenada	6 September 1991[a]	6 December 1991
Guatemala	6 May 1992[a]	5 August 1992
Guinea	24 January 1978	24 April 1978
Guyana	15 February 1977	15 May 1977
Haiti	6 February 1991[a]	6 May 1991
Hungary	17 January 1974	23 March 1976
Iceland	22 August 1979	22 November 1979
India	10 April 1979[a]	10 July 1979
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	24 June 1975	23 March 1976
Iraq	25 January 1971	23 March 1976
Ireland	8 December 1989	8 March 1990
Israel	3 October 1991[a]	3 January 1992
Italy	15 September 1978	15 December 1978
Jamaica	3 October 1975	23 March 1976
Japan	21 June 1979	21 September 1979
Jordan	28 May 1975	23 March 1976
Kazakhstan	by succession	
Kenya	1 May 1972[a]	23 March 1976
Kuwait	20 May 1996[a]	20 August 1996
Kyrgyzstan	7 October 1994[a]	7 January 1995
Latvia	14 April 1992[a]	14 July 1992

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Lebanon	3 November 1972[a]	23 March 1976
Lesotho	9 September 1992[a]	9 December 1992
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 May 1970[a]	23 March 1976
Liechtenstein	**10 December 1998[a]**	**10 March 1999**
Lithuania	20 November 1991[a]	20 February 1992
Luxembourg	18 August 1983	18 November 1983
Madagascar	21 June 1971	23 March 1976
Malawi	22 December 1993[a]	22 March 1994
Mali	16 July 1974[a]	23 March 1976
Malta	13 September 1990[a]	13 December 1990
Mauritius	12 December 1973[a]	23 March 1976
Mexico	23 March 1981[a]	23 June 1981
Mongolia	18 November 1974	23 March 1976
Morocco	3 May 1979	3 August 1979
Mozambique	21 July 1993[a]	21 October 1993
Namibia	28 November 1994[a]	28 February 1995
Nepal	14 May 1991	14 August 1991
Netherlands	11 December 1978	11 March 1979
New Zealand	28 December 1978	28 March 1979
Nicaragua	12 March 1980[a]	12 June 1980
Niger	7 March 1986[a]	7 June 1986
Nigeria	29 July 1993[a]	29 October 1993
Norway	13 September 1972	23 March 1976
Panama	8 March 1977	8 June 1977
Paraguay	10 June 1992[a]	10 September 1992
Peru	28 April 1978	28 July 1978
Philippines	23 October 1986	23 January 1987

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Poland	18 March 1977	18 June 1977
Portugal	15 June 1978	15 September 1978
Republic of Korea	10 April 1990[a]	10 July 1990
Republic of Moldova	26 January 1993[a]	26 April 1993
Romania	9 December 1974	23 March 1976
Russian Federation	16 October 1973	23 March 1976
Rwanda	16 April 1975[a]	23 March 1976
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	9 November 1981[a]	9 February 1982
San Marino	18 October 1985[a]	18 January 1986
Senegal	13 February 1978	13 May 1978
Seychelles	5 May 1992[a]	5 August 1992
Sierra Leone	23 August 1996[a]	23 November 1996
Slovakia	28 May 1993[b]	1 January 1993
Slovenia	6 July 1992[b]	6 July 1992
Somalia	24 January 1990[a]	24 April 1990
South Africa	**10 December 1998[a]**	**10 March 1999**
Spain	27 April 1977	27 July 1977
Sri Lanka	11 June 1980[a]	11 September 1980
Sudan	18 March 1986[a]	18 June 1986
Suriname	28 December 1976[a]	28 March 1977
Sweden	6 December 1971	23 March 1976
Switzerland	18 June 1992[a]	18 September 1992
Syrian Arab Republic	21 April 1969[a]	23 March 1976
Tajikistan	**4 January 1999[a]**	**4 April 1999**
Thailand	29 October 1996[a]	29 January 1997

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	18 January 1994[b]	17 September 1991
Togo	24 May 1984[a]	24 August 1984
Trinidad and Tobago	21 December 1978[a]	21 March 1979
Tunisia	18 March 1969	23 March 1976
Turkmenistan	1 May 1997[a]	1 August 1997
Uganda	20 June 1995[a]	20 September 1995
Ukraine	12 November 1973	23 March 1976
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	20 May 1976	20 August 1976
United Republic of Tanzania	11 June 1976[a]	11 September 1976
United States of America	8 June 1992	8 September 1992
Uruguay	1 April 1970	23 March 1976
Uzbekistan	27 September 1995[a]	27 December 1995
Venezuela	10 May 1978	10 August 1978
Viet Nam	24 September 1982[a]	24 December 1982
Yemen	9 February 1987[a]	9 May 1987
Yugoslavia	2 June 1971	23 March 1976
Zambia	10 April 1984 (a)	10 July 1984
Zimbabwe	13 May 1991 (a)	13 August 1991

Annex III

List of States that have ratified or acceded to the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as at 1 August 1999 (95)

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Algeria	12 September 1989[a]	12 December 1990
Angola	10 January 1992[a]	10 April 1992
Argentina	8 August 1986[a]	8 November 1986
Armenia	23 June 1993	23 September 1993
Australia	25 September 1991[a]	25 December 1991
Austria	10 December 1987	10 March 1988
Barbados	5 January 1973[a]	23 March 1976
Belarus	30 September 1992[a]	30 December 1992
Belgium	17 May 1994	17 August 1994
Benin	12 March 1992[a]	12 June 1992
Bolivia	12 August 1982[a]	12 November 1982
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 March 1995	1 June 1995
Bulgaria	26 March 1992[a]	26 June 1992
Burkina Faso	**4 January 1999[a]**	**4 April 1999**
Cameroon	27 June 1984[a]	27 September 1984
Canada	19 May 1976[a]	19 August 1976
Central African Republic	8 May 1981[a]	8 August 1981
Chad	9 June 1995[a]	9 September 1995
Chile	28 May 1992[a]	28 August 1992
Colombia	29 October 1969	23 March 1976
Congo	5 October 1983[a]	5 January 1984
Costa Rica	29 November 1968	23 March 1976

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Côte d'Ivoire	5 March 1997[a]	5 June 1997
Croatia	11 October 1995[a]	11 January 1996
Cyprus	15 April 1992	15 July 1992
Czech Republic	22 February 1993[b]	1 January 1993
Democratic Republic Of the Congo	**1 November 1976[a]**	**1 February 1977**
Denmark	6 January 1972	23 March 1976
Dominican Republic	4 January 1978[a]	4 April 1978
Ecuador	6 March 1969	23 March 1976
El Salvador	6 June 1995	6 September 1995
Equatorial Guinea	25 September 1987[a]	25 December 1987
Estonia	21 October 1991[a]	21 January 1992
Finland	19 August 1975	23 March 1976
France	17 February 1984[a]	17 May 1984
Gambia	9 June 1988[a]	9 September 1988
Georgia	3 May 1994[a]	3 August 1994
Germany	25 August 1993	25 November 1993
Greece	5 May 1997[a]	5 August 1997
Guinea	17 June 1993	17 September 1993
Guyana	10 May 1993[a]	10 August 1993
Hungary	7 September 1988[a]	7 December 1988
Iceland	22 August 1979[a]	22 November 1979
Ireland	8 December 1989	8 March 1990
Italy	15 September 1978	15 December 1978
Kyrgyzstan	7 October 1994[a]	7 January 1995
Latvia	22 June 1994	22 September 1994
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	16 May 1989[a]	16 August 1989
Lithuania	20 November 1991[a]	20 February 1992

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Luxembourg	18 August 1983[a]	18 November 1983
Madagascar	21 June 1971	23 March 1976
Malawi	10 June 1996[a]	10 September 1996
Malta	13 September 1990[a]	13 December 1990
Mauritius	12 December 1973[a]	23 March 1976
Mongolia	16 April 1991[a]	16 July 1991
Namibia	28 November 1994[a]	28 February 1995
Nepal	14 May 1991[a]	14 August 1991
Netherlands	11 December 1978	11 March 1979
New Zealand	26 May 1989[a]	26 August 1989
Nicaragua	12 March 1980[a]	12 June 1980
Niger	7 March 1986[a]	7 June 1986
Norway	13 September 1972	23 March 1976
Panama	8 March 1977	8 June 1977
Paraguay	10 January 1995	10 April 1995
Peru	3 October 1980	3 January 1981
Philippines	22 August 1989[a]	22 November 1989
Poland	7 November 1991[a]	7 February 1992
Portugal	3 May 1983	3 August 1983
Republic of Korea	10 April 1990[a]	10 July 1990
Romania	20 July 1993[a]	20 October 1993
Russian Federation	1 October 1991[a]	1 January 1992
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	9 November 1981[a]	9 February 1982
San Marino	18 October 1985[a]	18 January 1986
Senegal	13 February 1978	13 May 1978
Seychelles	5 May 1992[a]	5 August 1992

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession[a] or succession[b]	Date of entry into force
Sierra Leone	23 August 1996[a]	23 November 1996
Slovakia	28 May 1993[b]	1 January 1993
Slovenia	16 July 1993[a]	16 October 1993
Somalia	24 January 1990[a]	24 April 1990
Spain	25 January 1985[a]	25 April 1985
Suriname	28 December 1976[a]	28 March 1977
Sweden	6 December 1971	23 March 1976
Tajikistan	**4 January 1999[a]**	**4 April 1999**
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	12 December 1994[a]	12 March 1995
Togo	30 March 1988[a]	30 June 1988
Trinidad and Tobago	14 November 1980[a]	14 February 1981
Turkmenistan	1 May 1997[a]	1 August 1997
Uganda	14 November 1995[a]	14 February 1996
Ukraine	25 July 1991[a]	25 October 1991
Uruguay	1 April 1970	23 March 1976
Uzbekistan	27 September 1995[a]	7 December 1995
Venezuela	10 May 1978	10 August 1978
Zaire	1 November 1976[a]	1 February 1977
Zambia	10 April 1984[a]	10 July 1984

Annex IV

List of States that have ratified or acceded to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, as at 1 August 1999 (38)

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession[a]	Date of entry into force
Australia	2 October 1990[a]	11 July 1991
Austria	2 March 1993	2 June 1993
Azerbaijan	**22 January 1999[a]**	**22 April 1999**
Belgium	**8 December 1998**	**8 March 1999**
Colombia	5 August 1997[a]	5 November 1997
Costa Rica	**5 June 1998**	**5 September 1998**
Croatia	11 October 1995[a]	11 January 1996
Denmark	24 February 1994	24 May 1994
Ecuador	23 February 1993[a]	23 May 1993
Finland	4 April 1991	11 July 1991
Georgia	**22 March 1999[a]**	**22 June 1999**
Germany	18 August 1992	18 November 1992
Greece	5 May 1997[a]	5 August 1997
Hungary	24 February 1994	24 May 1994
Iceland	2 April 1991	11 July 1991
Ireland	18 June 1993[a]	18 September 1993
Italy	14 February 1995	14 May 1995
Liechtenstein	**10 December 1998[a]**	**10 March 1999**
Luxembourg	12 February 1992	12 May 1992
Malta	29 December 1994	29 March 1995
Mozambique	21 July 1993[a]	21 October 1993
Namibia	28 November 1994[a]	
Nepal	**4 March 1998**	**4 June 1998**
Netherlands	27 February 1991	11 July 1991
New Zealand	22 February 1990	11 July 1991

State party	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession[a]	Date of entry into force
Norway	5 September 1991	5 December 1991
Panama	21 January 1993[a]	21 April 1993
Portugal	17 October 1990	11 July 1991
Romania	27 February 1991	11 July 1991
Seychelles	15 December 1994[a]	15 March 1995
Slovakia	**22 June 1999[a]**	**22 September 1999**
Slovenia	10 March 1994	10 June 1994
Spain	11 April 1991	11 July 1991
Sweden	11 May 1990	11 July 1991
Switzerland	16 June 1994[a]	16 September 1994
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	26 January 1995[a]	26 April 1995
Uruguay	21 January 1993	21 April 1993
Venezuela	22 February 1993	22 May 1993

United Nations A/54/278

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 August 1999
English
Original: French

Fifty-fourth session
Item 20 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/1 L, of 7 December 1997, the present report describes the financial and material assistance provided by the United Nations system to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its economic recovery and reconstruction process.

II. General context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

2. The area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is 2,345,000 square kilometres, making it the third-largest country in all Africa. It shares borders with nine other countries: the Republic of the Congo to the north-west, the Central African Republic to the north, the Sudan to the north-east, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania to the east, Zambia to the south-east and Angola to the south-west. The westernmost extremity of the country is a short stretch of seacoast on the Atlantic Ocean. In terms of relief, the Democratic Republic of the Congo consists essentially of a gigantic flat-bottomed central basin, taking up 47 per cent of the country, the edges of which rise gradually to altitudes of between 500 and 1,500 metres, and to even more impressive heights of over 1,500 metres in its eastern part.

* A/54/150.

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3. The population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, growing as it is at an average rate of just over 3 per cent annually, was nearly 46 million in 1997 and is likely to increase to over 48 million by the year 2000 and to over 50 million by 2002. There are some ten cities with between 100,000 and 600,000 inhabitants, while the capital, Kinshasa, accounts for approximately 5 million of the country's 18 million city-dwellers.

4. As a result of the change of political regime in May 1997, the democratic process has begun to show signs of reviving. A constitutional commission was established in October 1997; its work has resulted in an initial draft constitution. After the President of the Republic had confirmed, in September 1998, that a referendum and elections would be held in 1999, a commission for institutional reform was set up with the task of drafting the various statutory instruments required for continuance of the democratization process. A further step was taken on 29 January 1999, with the issuance of a legislative decree relating to the establishment and organization of political parties and organizations.

5. The present armed conflict, which broke out in August 1998 and has engulfed over half the country, has undone much of the good work done since May 1997, reversing priorities and frustrating the initiatives of the new Government. This situation, inevitably, has delayed the establishment of the various institutions required for the renewal of the democratic process. The war first broke out in Kinshasa as well as in Bukavu and Goma, two major cities in the easternmost region of the country, near the Rwandan border.

6. As regards the macroeconomic situation generally, the economy has been stagnating since 1990. Between 1989 and 1996, GDP growth was negative. The Government's financial situation is characterized by a steepening decline in tax revenues. Whereas the tax-GDP ratio was 17 per cent before independence, by 1996 that indicator had fallen to the unprecedentedly low level of 4.7 per cent. In June 1998, a monetary reform was introduced in an attempt to, *inter alia*, unify the country's several monetary zones and combat hyperinflation, but the expansion of the war has deprived the economy of a major part of the production required for monetary stability. The expedient of printing money in order to finance budget deficits has merely resulted in a further depreciation of the Congolese franc.

III. Economic measures

7. In 1997 the Government adopted its Triennial Minimum Programme, which identifies the national reconstruction needs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and outlines the Government's medium-term priorities. The Economic Stabilization and Recovery Programme, which was presented at the "Friends of the Congo" meeting held in Brussels in December 1997, is the first stage in the execution of the Triennial Minimum Programme. It sets forth the various measures (macroeconomic adjustment, economic recovery and the halting of the loss of human capital) that are most urgently required.

8. In an effort to attain the objectives set out in the Triennial Minimum Programme, the Government has assigned top priority to the reconstruction of the State, paying particular attention to the tasks of defining its missions more closely and operating more effectively. This is one reason why the Government has opted for a social market economy and selected the subsidiarity principle as the basis for the sharing of roles between the State and other actors (including the private sector, associations, non-governmental organizations, decentralized organizations, etc.).

9. Under the Government's strategy, the private sector will be the main force driving growth in the years ahead. However, in order for a development strategy based on the private

sector to succeed, a modern, efficient public sector is also essential. Accordingly, the Government has articulated its strategy around the following four themes:

(a) Maintaining a high-quality macroeconomic environment;

(b) Fostering an environment favourable to wealth creation;

(c) Redefining the role of the State, with a view to enhancing the quality and effectiveness of public services;

(d) Reforming the financial system.

10. The effective implementation of all the above is a necessary precondition for renewed private investment, domestic or foreign. At present, individuals and corporate entities in the private sector invariably operate on a short-term basis. The re-establishment of a modern, efficient State should restore their confidence in the future and enable them to make choices for the medium term.

11. Despite the crisis and the civil war with which the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently afflicted, the Government has taken a number of economic measures framed both to accommodate the various aspects of the country's development and to address the need to resolve the crisis and end the state of emergency.

12. It is important to note, however, that the hopes raised by the "Friends of the Congo" meeting have not been realized, as a result of various disagreements between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the international community. Despite a number of World Bank missions and various meetings of its Steering Committee, the trust fund set up at Brussels for the purpose of supporting the reconstruction effort has been unable to function. As a result, the country has been deprived of a resource essential to its economic recovery. Broadly speaking, the first and second halves of 1998 were characterized by markedly different trends in economic indicators. The period extending from January to July was marked by budgetary management aimed at restricting money creation. This revamped macroeconomic framework led to the successful introduction of the Congolese franc on 30 June 1998, despite continued deflation accentuated by rigorous management of public finances and the absence of outside funding. The period extending from August to December, for its part, was attended by difficulties arising from the war in the eastern region of the country, which led to:

(a) A slackening of budgetary discipline owing to falling revenues and new funding priorities as a result of the war;

(b) Suspension of foreign debt payments (to the International Monetary Fund (IMF);

(c) A loss of monetary stability, with a widening gap between the official rate of exchange and the black-market rate;

(d) A three-figure cumulative rate of inflation.

13. Economically, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has reached an impasse. As regards production, the downturn continued in 1998. The impact of the war has been catastrophic: all activity in the eastern part of the country has been paralysed, and production has declined by 10 per cent over the past two years, with a total decrease of over 50 per cent since the beginning of the 1990s. Updated forecasts for 1998 issued in June had assumed that growth would be stagnant (-0.7 per cent, in contrast to a budget target of 2.5 per cent), but national accounts estimates suggest that growth in 1998 actually fell off by 3.5 per cent.

14. It thus appears that the war has deepened the recession experienced in the first half of the year, both by paralysing all economic activity in the country's eastern region (supply effect) and by causing production to shrink in the rest of the country (demand effect resulting

from the collapse of household income and the downward revision of non-war-related public expenditure).

15. Damage to basic infrastructure has been severe in areas affected by the war, especially in the eastern and south-western regions of the country. Damage has been estimated at several hundred million United States dollars. A more precise assessment must await subsequent investigation, but clearly the situation of the people, which was already precarious, has become even worse.

IV. Situation and challenges relating to governance

16. The situation being experienced by the Democratic Republic of the Congo has aggravated problems relating to governance and posed the following major challenges:

(a) Restoration of an environment favourable to the consolidation of peace and security, reconstruction and revival of sustainable human development;

(b) Establishment of a favourable climate for the electoral process and democratic institutions;

(c) Reform of the civil service and transparency in the administration of public affairs;

(d) Reform of the judiciary in order to ensure impartial proceedings and to protect transactions and property;

(e) Capacity-building of local institutions and grass-roots communities in order to enhance their participation in development.

V. Situation and challenges of sustainable economic and human development

17. With 125 million hectares of forest covering half its territory, the Democratic Republic of the Congo possesses 47 per cent of the African tropical forests and 6 per cent of the world's reserves. This wealth is being exploited to some extent, although the wildlife parks and flora in the eastern part of the country were severely damaged between 1994 and 1997 by the influx of refugees and displaced persons, which caused serious problems of erosion, deforestation and over-exploitation of natural resources. The situation has been aggravated by the conflict now raging in the eastern part of the country. Trees will have to be replanted on an estimated 4,000 hectares in Nord-Kivu and an estimated 2,000 hectares in Sud-Kivu; this reforestation does not take into account destroyed forest cover in the nature reserves.

18. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has endorsed the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992) and has adopted the Agenda 21 guidelines. It has ratified and signed a number of conventions on desertification, biodiversity, climate change, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Wetland Convention and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has already begun to formulate strategies and plans of action to ensure the sustainable utilization and conservation of its resources.

19. The reconstruction of the State cannot be effective in the medium and long term unless it has the financial and human capacities to enable it to assume responsibility for its

traditional duties. At the meeting of the "Friends of the Congo", most of the donors expressed the desire to carry out their future activities within the framework of a coherent medium- and long-term reconstruction and socio-economic development programme. However, national capacities to follow up current activities, formulate development strategies and undertake negotiations with the private sector have greatly deteriorated. The following should be stressed:

(a) Weakness of the capacity to analyse and formulate strategies and policies;

(b) Shortage of equipment and failure to function of the institutional environment;

(c) Inadequacy of public finances management;

(d) Comprehensive lack of reliable statistical information.

VI. Cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations

20. The Government and the United Nations system are in agreement with regard to recovery and reconstruction needs. In this connection, the entire United Nation system operating in Kinshasa has agreed to harmonize its cooperation programmes, whose execution should coincide with the Government's Triennial Minimum Programme. In this context, the process of elaborating a common country assessment for the Democratic Republic of the Congo is under way and should culminate in the elaboration of a strategy note.

21. It should be noted that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has assisted and protected the civilian population, in particular ethnic minorities, including refugees and displaced persons. In this connection, various humanitarian appeals have been issued to a number of the country's development partners. These appeals have met with a favourable response, particularly in the following areas:

(a) Health (haemorrhagic fever epidemic, expanded programme on immunization (EPI) for children, rehabilitation of health infrastructures, etc.);

(b) Food security;

(c) Water supply;

(d) Security and voluntary repatriation of populations originating in conflict countries.

22. Aware of the seriousness of the situation, the entire United Nations system in Kinshasa has intervened at various levels, each agency in its respective sphere of activity, by incorporating the emergency humanitarian activities necessitated by the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its traditional programme. The crisis management committees set up at both the central and provincial levels have received the support of the United Nations system, which has mobilized other partners and coordinated their operations.

23. The contribution of the various United Nations agencies to the economic recovery and reconstruction efforts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is summarized below.

24. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in addressing the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has continued to shift the focus of its activities to the central themes of sustainable human development and poverty alleviation in order to promote economic recovery and national reconstruction. Within the context of poverty alleviation, it should be noted that:

(a) Support for the National Agricultural and Rural Sector Recovery Programme has made it possible to provide technical support to farmers and to make available certain inputs, particularly fertilizer and seeds;

(b) Women have been given support and training in order to enhance their role as actors in economic development;

(c) Support for the health sector has been aimed at improving quality and facilitating access to health services. With the cooperation of the World Health Organization (WHO), UNDP has formulated a national health development plan, elaborated strategies for providing care to persons infected with HIV/AIDS and launched pilot activities in six of the country's eleven provinces;

(d) Health infrastructures have been rehabilitated, particularly in the war-torn provinces;

(e) The Congolese educational system has been revamped in order to adapt it to current requirements.

25. In the field of the environment and natural resource management, UNDP support is being given for implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. This involves the formulation of action plans and strategies aimed at ensuring the conservation and sustainable utilization of environmental resources (National Action Plans on Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change). In this same vein, the National Action Plan on Habitat is being formulated and pilot activities to install sanitation facilities are under way. This work will enable the Government both to outline a policy in this area in order to ensure access to adequate housing and to undertake consultations with development partners with a view to its implementation.

26. In the area of governance and development management, UNDP, within the context of the implementation of the conclusions of the meeting of "Friends of the Congo", has helped the Government to elaborate its National Capacity-building Programme. The implementation of this programme will enable the Government to acquire the technical capacity to support the process of economic stabilization and recovery and initiate structural reforms aimed at improving both the institutional and legal environments, a sine qua non for the revival of traditional cooperation with various partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

27. Apart from its development support programmes, UNDP, in cooperation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, has supported efforts to coordinate humanitarian assistance through inter-agency missions providing technical and logistical support to current operations. These missions have made it possible to assess needs and strengthen initial crisis management at the provincial level. The coordination of humanitarian activities has also been facilitated by the continuation of weekly technical meetings and by the support and advice of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Kinshasa crisis in August/September 1998 led UNDP to provide technical support to the newly formed Kinshasa Crisis Committee, responsible for taking over and building on the preliminary efforts of the United Nations Disaster Management Team. In the Kivu provinces, emergency rehabilitation of public facilities and support for community-level initiatives have made it possible to provide ongoing support for community survival efforts.

World Food Programme

28. The World Food Programme (WFP) has developed its activities in Kisangani for those affected by floods and for displaced persons. In response to the Kinshasa crisis (August/September 1998), a food distribution operation was carried out for 120,000 recipients selected from among those most seriously affected by the armed conflict. Food assistance programmes have also been carried out and are still under way for the Angolan refugee populations in Bandundu, in Bas-Congo and in Katanga, and for the refugee population from the Republic of the Congo in Bas-Congo.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

29. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has made efforts to restart humanitarian assistance in 1999. These efforts have been dependent on the political situation and security conditions, both within the country and throughout the region, and, of course, on access to refugees. Although developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have severely impaired operational capacity, UNHCR has continued, throughout 1998 and in 1999, to provide assistance to Sudanese (60,000), Angolan (130,000) and Burundian (11,600) refugees and to conduct its voluntary repatriation programme for Congolese, Angolan, Burundian, Rwandan and Ugandan refugees.

United Nations Children's Fund

30. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has continued its humanitarian activities for women and children — support for the expanded programme on immunization, monitoring and response to possible epidemics (including cholera and Province Orientale and Sud-Kivu), rehabilitation of health facilities and assistance to children in need of special protection measures — in the eastern provinces. The outbreak of the latest armed conflict in August 1998 interrupted most of the activities in the eastern part of the country. In its regular programme, UNICEF support has enabled schools to reopen in eight provinces and has facilitated activities relating to the national expanded programme on immunization and projects to provide assistance to children working in the Kasaï-Oriental mineral fields. UNICEF has also supported the preparation and conduct of national vaccination days, initially scheduled for August but actually held in December 1998 and January 1999 in six provinces.

World Health Organization

31. The World Health Organization (WHO) has geared its activities to the year's events. In cooperation with UNICEF and other partners, it has played a role of primary importance in vaccinating children. With financing from UNDP, it has carried out projects in three main areas:

(a) Epidemiological surveillance and rapid response to epidemics and disasters through activities carried out by its seven provincial field offices;

(b) Disease control, including support for specialized health programmes;

(c) Support for the formulation and implementation of a plan to rehabilitate the health system.

United Nations Population Fund

32. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), working with the Government as well as with other agencies of the United Nations system, has begun the process of formulating its new country programme, scheduled to be launched in 2000 under the terms of the agreement reached by the group on the harmonization of programming cycles. UNFPA has continued to provide regular support to non-governmental organizations in the areas of HIV/AIDS, maternal mortality and the promotion of women.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

33. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), concentrated its humanitarian efforts in the Kivu provinces throughout the first half of 1998, planning the distribution of seed and tools in Nord- and Sud-Kivu, and emergency cattle vaccination campaigns in Sud-Kivu. Both national and international non-governmental organizations as well as local units of the Ministry of Agriculture participated in implementation. In addition, FAO launched an emergency programme for the supply of food crop seeds and hand tools to populations affected by the crisis in provinces under government control.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

34. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has worked closely with UNDP to coordinate humanitarian activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and has collected and processed statistical data that has contributed to the formulation of contingency plans and the ongoing rehabilitation process. Follow-up and evaluation of the situation in Kalémie, Bukavu, Province Orientale and Nord-Kivu through the organization of inter-agency missions, together with analysis and proposals concerning the situation in Nord-Kivu, constitute other contributions to humanitarian coordination in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. since the outbreak of war in August 1998 it has been possible to re-establish a presence in the eastern part of the country and to define conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance. The main challenges, initiatives, and achievements are as follows:

(a) The drafting, for the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and donors, in particular the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the International Committee of the Red Cross, of the Principles of Engagement for the Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These Principles, which emphasize the non-political nature of the humanitarian activities and the need to restore security and ensure access, follow-up and monitoring, were submitted to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as to the rebel authorities and were approved by all parties;

(b) The establishment of United Nations humanitarian offices in Goma and Bukavu.

(c) A firm commitment to defend the rights of minority populations and to seek solutions to the problems of groups vulnerable to persecution;

(d) The first direct humanitarian flights across the frontline between Kinshasa and Goma, organized by the United Nations;

(e) Support for the preparation of a national campaign against polio and appeals for restraint in the combat zones (quiet days);

(f) Negotiations for the return of looted and requisitioned goods belonging to the United Nations and to non-governmental organizations, and humanitarian assistance in certain areas of the country;

(g) A better understanding of the changing nature of the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A series of inter-agency humanitarian evaluation missions has been conducted in Nord- and Sud-Kivu, Kisangani, Province Orientale, Katanga and the provinces of Ikela/Equateur, followed up by joint humanitarian action plans;

(h) The development of joint humanitarian assistance strategies for the United Nations system as a whole and the mobilization of resources for relief operations;

(i) The collection and processing of data with a view to drawing up contingency plans as part of the ongoing rehabilitation process.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

35. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has continued, with the assistance and cooperation of other agencies within the United Nations system, to encourage the Government to draw up a national plan for the promotion of human rights. These efforts have resulted in the convening of a number of seminars (for government officials, representatives of civil society and leaders of non-governmental human rights organizations) with a view to incorporating a human rights perspective into national reconstruction efforts. While conducting an ongoing analysis of the human rights situation, the Office of the High Commissioner has continued to carry out programmes aimed at strengthening non-governmental human rights organizations as well as national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights.

VII. Humanitarian strategy of the United Nations

36. Following missions carried out by Martin Griffiths, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator and Berhanu Dinka, Regional Humanitarian Adviser for the Great Lakes Region and Representative of the Secretary-General, the close of 1998 saw a resurgence of humanitarian involvement, based on specific evaluation criteria and grounded in two joint undertakings by United Nations agencies and their principal international partners:

(a) The "Kigali Commitment"(drawn up in Kinshasa by the Emergency Relief Coordinator's team (agency chiefs)) setting out a humanitarian strategy for the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a whole;

(b) The "Nairobi Commitment"(the product of a joint meeting of ECHO and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance), provided that the agencies operating in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would conduct activities on the basis of the same principles and operating conditions. In a similar spirit, the group agreed that, although it would endeavour to respect insofar as possible any restrictions imposed by the Congolese authorities, it could not rule out options that would allow for more effective and less costly humanitarian assistance.

37. These principles and commitments have been implemented throughout Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu and Province Orientale. In regions under government control, however, assistance and evaluation of the humanitarian situation have depended on a decision by the central authorities at the highest level to facilitate unconditional humanitarian assistance to the most affected populations. The city of Kinshasa received particular attention in the form of a contribution by the United Nations system to international, largely Italian, efforts to assist the population.

38. All these initiatives have been carried out despite the climate of uncertainty prevailing throughout the country, characterized by potential and actual food shortages, a hard-to-reach population scattered throughout Katanga, and a volatile situation in Kasaï hindering the effective distribution of humanitarian assistance (scattered population, heavy military presence, etc.).

VIII. Prospects for reconstruction

39. In the current crisis, we must not lose sight of the opportunities for change that have emerged in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But their realization necessarily requires a resolution of the crisis: namely, an end to the conflict, and national reconciliation. With a view to ending the economic crisis, appeals should be made to the international community for assistance in rebuilding the country.

1. Peace and reconciliation

40. First and foremost, it is essential to find a solution to the problems currently impeding the reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country with immense potential. The establishment of a framework of peace and reconciliation is a sine qua non for the creation of an environment conducive to rehabilitation and the resumption of human development. Any activities undertaken in this regard must reflect the will of political decision-makers to strengthen the peace process; UNDP will further this aim by supplying material and technical support to the various bodies created to sustain it

2. Preparing a reconstruction strategy

41. Concurrently, assistance should be provided to the Government for the preparation of a development strategy, which should include the following elements: financial stabilization, reform, reconstruction and development.

42. At the meeting of "Friends of the Congo", most donors expressed their wish to make future contributions in the context of a coherent medium- and long-term reconstruction and socio-economic development programme. Although the document submitted in Brussels represents a good beginning, the donors have suggested that it should be supplemented by:

(a) A medium-term structural reform programme;

(b) Credible measures to attract support from economic agents and donors;

(c) Improved definition of priorities;

(d) Improved role-sharing by the various actors;

(e) Improvement of conditions in the private sector;

(f) Efforts to find a solution to the problem of external debt.

43. The Government must do its utmost to prepare the programme immediately with a view to facilitating its implementation as soon as the minimum conditions for peace and security have been established.

3. Resumption of structural cooperation

44. Once the minimum conditions for peace and security have been established, the Government should hold discussions with IMF and the World Bank, this being the prerequisite for an effective resumption of structural cooperation with the international community. First and foremost, an agreement should be reached to stabilize payment arrears owed to IMF. Such an agreement would send an important signal in the resumption of the macroeconomic dialogue.

45. The new framework should also allow the Democratic Republic of the Congo to find a lasting solution to the problem of its external debt, in particular through the development of a programme which would allow it to benefit from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.